Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1 through 45 have been canceled. Claims 46 through 57 are allowed. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as presented. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-45 (Canceled)

46. (Original) A method of encoding acknowledgement channels in base stations of a wireless communication system, the method comprising:

receiving a reverse link traffic channel data frame from a remote terminal;

allowing absence of acknowledgement (ACK) signals on an acknowledgement channel of a best base station to indicate that quality of the received data frame is good;

allowing absence of negative acknowledgement (NAK) signals on acknowledgement channels of secondary base stations to indicate that quality of the received data frame is bad;

encoding the ACK signals and the NAK signals, and transmitting the encoded signals on the acknowledgement channels during a switching period.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the switching period is configured as a duration of a soft-handoff.

48. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the best base station is selected based on forward link channel quality.

49. (Original) The method of claim 48, wherein the forward link channel quality includes a strongest forward link pilot signal detected by a remote terminal.

50. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the best base station is selected based on reverse link power control information.

51. (Original) The method of claim 50, wherein the reverse link power control information includes power control (PC) commands.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51, further comprising:

enabling the remote terminal to determine that a base station is the best base station if a difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a first threshold.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, further comprising:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the best base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands exceeds a second threshold.

54. (Original) The method of claim 53, wherein the second threshold is larger than the first threshold.

55. (Original) The method of claim 54, further comprising:

enabling a base station to determine that it is the secondary base station if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is below a third threshold.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55, wherein the third threshold is smaller than the first threshold.

57. (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:

transmitting both ACK and NAK signals explicitly if the difference between 'power down' and 'power up' PC commands is above the third threshold but is below the second threshold.